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C O N F I D E N T I A L UNVIE VIENNA 000673

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DEPARTMENT FOR IO, ISN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/06/2017

TAGS: [KNPP](#) [IAEA](#) [AORC](#) [IR](#)

SUBJECT: IAEA/IRAN: RUSSIA AND CHINA SEE NO POINT TO VIENNA
P5+1 CONSULTATIONS

REF: A) STATE 151038 B) UNVIE 653 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Charged'Affairs Geoffrey R. Pyatt for reasons 1.4 b,d,h

Summary

¶1. (C) At a UK-hosted P5 1 Heads of Mission(HOM) meeting November 5, UK Ambassador Smith sought to engage Russia and China on next steps on Iran following the November 2 London Poldirs' meeting. Russian and Chinese Ambassadors made it clear that they intended to do nothing prior to the release of the DG's new report on Iran, anticipated for November 15. They were singularly uninterested in developing questions or criteria ahead of the report, or in considering elements for a French-proposed Board resolution, and saw no point to meeting even at the experts-level prior to the report. The U.S. shared ref a points and argued for a common approach to the Secretariat/DG that would set a high standard for Iranian cooperation. Given the lack of P5 1 agreement, France and the UK intended to present their questions/criteria bilaterally by Friday November 9. Offline, Mission also informally shared possible BOG resolution elements with the French but cautioned against setting a new deadline that undercuts the P5 2 Ministerial declaration. The French suggested that the EU-3 would take the lead in drafting a resolution. End Summary.

Russians and Chinese Await Report

¶2. (C) UK Ambassador Smith called the P5 1 together to follow up on Poldirs London meeting, focusing on two issues: questions Iran should reasonably be expected to answer within the framework of the November DG report, and second, possible Board action in November. Smith distributed UK questions (ref b), also circulated at the Poldirs' meeting, and noted that the UK was not seeking line-by-line agreement (Note: Russian and Chinese Ambassadors claimed they had not previously seen the UK questions. End note.) He clarified that the questions were intended, in the first instance, as an informal means of assessing a "positive outcome," and reminded HOMs that Poldirs/Ministers would look to Vienna-based Missions for such an assessment. Smith asked for views as to how they could best be communicated to the Secretariat in advance of the Board. Because the next

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scheduled Board meeting after November 22 is not until March, Smith also requested views on a Board resolution to require another DG report in the intervening months.

¶3. (C) German Ambassador Gottwald remarked that the main

question is not historical but one of ongoing military intent and relevance today. Certain gaps may be left to historians, he claimed, and emphasized the need for practical criteria. French Ambassador Deniau underlined that assessment of the success or failure of the work plan cannot be based on "atmospherics", a point the UK echoed, but on precise answers to specific questions.

¶4. (C) Russian Ambassador Zmeyevsky responded by defending the DG's prerogatives and argued that it was not the P5 1's duty to impose on him, that he should be trusted, and that Member States should pass to him any relevant information. The DG was not in a position to respond to questions or criteria that were outside his mandate or Board decisions of which he was well aware. Zmeyevsky called for patience and insisted on awaiting the DG report before passing judgment. Chinese Ambassador Tang associated himself with Russian comments and touted the professionalism of the Secretariat, arguing we should wait for the DG report, lest we give the wrong impression. The Secretariat already has criteria, he noted. China also preferred bilateral channels for any communications with the Agency.

We Cannot Sit on Our Hands

¶5. (C) U.S. Charge assured the group of continued U.S. support to the Secretariat and noted U/S Burns' comments to the press following his November 1 meeting with DG ElBaradei (septel). At the same time, the U.S. sought to encourage a common understanding of the need for full disclosure by Iran. Charge shared ref a points on criteria for the November report, which he noted were not exhaustive, but are based on previous DG reports and geared toward asking the right questions of Iran. Regarding Russian concerns about taking a stance before the DG's report, Charge emphasized that the

P5 1 could not allow Ahmadinejad's repeated claims about the nuclear file being "closed" to go unchallenged.

¶6. (C) Smith agreed that the technical competence of the Secretariat was not in question, that the intent was not to

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provide the Secretariat a "script," and that we could not "sit on our hands" until the report is issued. The IAEA's questions had been unanswered for years, he noted, and if they remain so, we cannot conclude that the work plan remains on track or assess "positive outcome." He reminded his Russian and Chinese counterparts that the DG is at service of the Board, which can provide formal or informal direction. Deniau also countered the notion that asking questions was an imposition on the Secretariat.

Consideration of Resolution Contingent on Report

¶7. (C) Deniau argued that the work plan could not be allowed to drag on for months, and that a Board resolution would be the best way to clarify the way forward. The DG preferred to take instruction from the Board rather than individual members, he noted. Zmeyevsky could not envisage a resolution without first having seen the DG's report as to whether or not progress had been achieved. Once we see the report, he claimed, we can determine whether or not we are satisfied, discuss further steps and try to find a common denominator. He shared the view that any resolution should aim to consolidate Board consensus. At this point, however, there were too many unknowns to engage on resolution elements. Zmeyevsky also did not exclude a last minute "surprise" from Tehran. Moscow's assessment was that the Iranians understood the seriousness of the situation but "nothing more" and would try to find a compromise without detriment to their core positions. China agreed with Russia on the need to see and evaluate the DG's report, and claimed that we still have time. Tang saw the content of any resolution as contingent

on the DG report.

¶18. (C) Gottwald saw the need to prepare for various alternatives, and for the most likely scenario of a report citing some progress but not enough. A resolution backed by the P5 1 and the entire Board would stipulate what remains to be done and set expectations for the future, he suggested. Such a resolution would also help the self-perception of the Board which maintains an important role on this dossier. The UK agreed that any resolution must command consensus. Smith advised that work on resolution elements, leaving placeholders for issues covered in the report, be prepared in advance given the short time frame between the release of the report and the Board meeting. A resolution could reaffirm unanimous Board decisions, including on suspension, and reinforce deadlines for answers to specific questions by a particular date, he noted. The Board could require a DG report on these issues in the intervening months before the regular Board meeting in March.

¶19. (C) Charge said he did not have cleared instructions but one key element for a resolution would be to specify the conditions under which the Board would return the Iranian file to "routine" safeguards implementation. Germany and the UK agreed that implicitly or explicitly a resolution would refute Ahmadinejad's comments on the closure of the Iranian file. Charge cautioned that that any Board action in Vienna must be consistent with the September P5 2 statement, which already sets a November deadline that is also reflected in the work plan. Zmeyevsky argued that the P5 2 statement did not set a deadline for Vienna, and that the Agency maintains some flexibility. He clarified that he too was uninstructed, and that certain issues were for New York not Vienna. In any case, Russia would await the DG's report and base its position on the concrete facts and assessments by the Secretariat.

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¶10. (C) Deniau acknowledged that the P5 1 were not in a position to pre-judge the DG's report but highlighted three advantages to a Board resolution: first, it would demonstrate that IAEA institutions were working and thus be helpful to the Secretariat; second, it would build on previous Board consensus; and lastly it would provide an assessment of the report and future implementation of the work plan (a placeholder until the report is released). The UK saw a case for a resolution regardless of what the report says, and Germany cited a need to reaffirm the role of the IAEA.

No to Expert Level Consultations

¶11. (C) The UK suggested P5 1 expert-level consultations by the end of the week to consider questions/criteria and resolution elements. Russia saw no point to such consultations before the report, and China said it would not have instructions in advance of the report. Smith tried to argue, to no avail, that we were missing an opportunity by doing nothing; that the report's content was not a mystery; and that P5 1 Ministers would be looking to Vienna Missions for a timely assessment.

Next Steps

¶12. (C) Following the meeting, the UK and France advised that they would proceed on a bilateral basis to present questions individually to the Secretariat by week's end. Deniau suggested that based on past precedent, the EU-3 will take the lead on drafting a possible Board resolution. We shared some informal elements with the French offline and explained our reservations about setting any additional deadlines. The French agreed to hold off on this issue until after the November 19 P5 1 Poldirs meeting. The Germans told us they do not plan to seek a meeting with the Secretariat, as they do

not have a specific list of questions or criteria to discuss.

Comment

¶113. (C) Russia and China continue to hide behind Secretariat / DG pronouncements on Iran. Their unwillingness to set any standards or criteria or pose any uncomfortable questions to the Secretariat in advance of the report demonstrates that they have abdicated their responsibility to assess Iran's compliance. Their unwillingness to engage in P5 1 consultations also does not bode well for concerted action in the Board. End Comment.

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